

REMARKS

Claim 2 is cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer. Therefore, claims 1-12 are the claims currently pending in the present Application.

Claim 1 is amended to clarify features recited thereby. This amendment to claim 1 preserves the claim scope of claim 2 (now cancelled).

Information Disclosure Statement

Pursuant to the Examiner's request on page 2 of the Office Action mailed December 15, 2004, filed herewith is PTO Form 1449 for the Information Disclosure Statement filed on April 6, 2001.

The Examiner is now respectfully requested to acknowledge review and consideration of the references cited therein.

Rejection of Claims 5-8 and 12 under 35 U.S.C. § 112

Claims 5-8 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as not enabling, on the following grounds:

(a) Claim 5

Claim 5, reciting the limitation "with first and second read optical," is allegedly not supported in the Specification (claims 6-8 are rejected because of their dependency from claim 5).

Applicant respectfully submits that a person of ordinary skill in the art would have readily understood that the cited feature of claim 5 is fully supported in the Specification. The passage of the Specification at page 22 discussed by the Examiner (Office Action, page 2) must be read in light of the discussion of an operation of a system according to an embodiment of the invention of which it is a

part.

By way of example, the Examiner's attention is drawn to the Applicant's disclosure, page 22, lines 3-5, where retry processing is discussed when a notification is received, discussed on page 22, lines 1-2 of the Specification, that "that no character string is determined." This portion of the Specification discloses that when based on a first read optical condition, notification is provided that "no character string is determined," and retry processing is provided during which the sorter control "searches for a readable optical condition," Specification, page 22, lines 8-13.

Claims 6-8 depend from claim 5 and were rejected under this rejection solely because of their dependency from rejected claim 5. Therefore, this rejection with respect to claims 5-8 should now be withdrawn.

(b) Claim 12

Claim 12, reciting that the "ID includes a first ID formed from code information and a second ID formed from character/numeral information," is allegedly not supported in the Specification.

Applicant respectfully submits that a person of ordinary skill in the art would have readily understood that the cited feature of claim 12, that the "ID includes a first ID formed from code information and a second ID formed from character/numeral information," is fully supported in the Specification.

Support for the cited feature may be found, by way of example, at page 15, lines 8-14, which states that "alphanumeric characters are stamped as a wafer ID 12a on the left of the upper surface of the semiconductor wafer 11. Further alphanumeric

characters and a two-dimensional code are stamped as wafer IDs 20b and 20c on a lower surface 21 of the semiconductor wafer 11, as shown in Fig. 7.”

Therefore, an ID formed from code information, and an ID formed from character/numeral information are fully supported. Accordingly, this portion of the rejection with respect to claim 12 should now be withdrawn.

(c) Claim 12

Claim 12, reciting “performing digital recognition processing of the first ID and analog recognition processing of the second ID,” is allegedly not supported in the Specification.

According to an aspect of Applicant’s claimed invention, the two-dimensional code either can or cannot be read, and typically, there will be no instance in which it can be read incompletely or partially. In the United States where the T7 code is often used, in the instance where trouble is found in reading, it may be considered either to stamp the ID at a several places or to use other alphanumeric character systems in addition to T7 code. ID recognition with a high degree of accuracy becomes possible by adopting the ID when the ID could be read by the code system from among a plurality of IDs, and, in case of a plurality of alphanumeric character systems, by adopting the ID having the highest reading score.

Applicant’s disclosure, page 18, line 9 - page 19, line 16, explains that an obtained recognition result for a two-dimensional code “is either ‘true’ or ‘false’ (digital evaluation of logic ‘0’ or ‘1’).” At page 19, line 1, of the Specification it states that when the wafer ID 20c is processed but cannot be determined, then ID 12a

and ID 20b are read. (Specification, page 16, lines 24-26, explains that wafer ID 20c may be a two-dimensional code.) Accordingly, this portion of the rejection with respect to claim 12 should now be withdrawn.

Rejection of Claims 1-12 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, First Paragraph

Claims 1-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as failing to meet the written description requirement. This rejection is traversed.

The Examiner alleges that “the highest score being adopted only if it is at least equal to a predetermined minimum score” is not supported in the Specification.

Applicant respectfully submits that a person of ordinary skill in the art would have readily understood that the cited feature of claim 5 is fully supported in the Specification, for example at page 22, lines 8-13, which states that a “recognition result whose evaluation score is the highest among recognition results under a plurality of optical conditions and is 70 or higher” is “defined as a predetermined character string”. Therefore, the feature of adopting the highest score only if it is at least equal to a predetermined minimum score is fully supported in Applicant’s disclosure.

Claims 2-12 depend from independent claim one cannot rejected solely because of their dependency from a rejected base claim. Therefore, this rejection should now be withdrawn.

Rejection of Claims 1, 2, 5, 8, 9 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b)

Claims 1, 2, 5, 8, 9 and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 (b) as allegedly being anticipated by Ono Satoru, Japanese Patent Publication No. 2000-055820 (JP Application No. 10-227184). This rejection is traversed.

The Examiner alleges that Ono Satoru at page 3, paragraph 16, teaches an evaluation score obtained “for both the character string as a whole and for individual characters” (Office Action, page 3, underline added).

Ono Satoru is directed to an optical recognition device for recognizing a single ID attached on a wafer. According to the paragraph 0016 of Ono, describes that both evaluation scores of an individual character to constitute an ID and a whole character string are obtained. However, what is obtained is an evaluation score for one ID.

On the other hand, according to an aspect of Applicant’s invention, the ID for the wafer is determined based on a recognition result of a plurality of IDs. For this reason, according to the present invention, the determination of an ID can be made with a greater degree of certainty. In addition, as a result of recognizing an ID of a portion having no change in the wafer state from among a plurality of IDs, the recognition result is less likely to be influenced by a change in the wafer state.

Therefore, Ono does not disclose the recitations of independent claim 1. Claims 2, 5, 8, 9, and 11 depend from independent claim 1 and therefore incorporate novel and nonobvious features thereof. Accordingly, claims 2, 5, 8, 9, and 11 are patentably distinguishable over the prior art for at least the reasons that independent

claim 1 is patentably distinguishable over the prior art. Therefore, this rejection should now be withdrawn.

Rejection of Claims 3,6-7 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 3, 6-7 and 10 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as allegedly being obvious from Ono Satoru in view of Hunter, U.S. patent No. 6, 697,517. This rejection is traversed.

Hunter does not cure the deficiencies of Ono Satoru as they relate to independent claim 1 from which rejected claims 3, 6-7 and 10 depend. Therefore, claims 3, 6-7 and 10 are patentably distinguishable over the prior art for at least the reasons that claim 1 is patentably distinguishable over the prior art.

In view of the foregoing discussion, the Application is now believed to be allowable and the Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider the rejection, and to allow the Application. Should the Examiner have any questions about the within remarks, or about the Application generally, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned attorney at the telephone number listed below.

Respectfully submitted,



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